

critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY
EL 5-6894 T.M. Kraus



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This Week

Kiss Me Kate-City Center 5/9. NYC Light Opera Company revival of Cole Porter musical. Kitty Carlisle, David Atkinson head cast, Bert Shevelove directed.

The Lovers-Beck 5/10 Playwrights Co & Gale Styne present new play by Leslie Stevens. With Darren McGavin, Hurd Hatfield, Joanne Woodward. Michael Gordon directed.

Next Week

The Maids-Tempo 5/18
...Man with Golden Arm-
Cherry Lane 5/20...Litt-
lest Revue-Phoenix 5/22
...Three Times Three-
Chanin 5/23.

Interview Hi-Lite

It smells like a hit, predicted Susan Johnson, Most Happy Fella, to Johnson, World Telegram & Sun, prior to opening of musical. She felt she had been enough flops to have a sensitive nose. Two items she attributes to her success. She goes to all the auditions, and she is lucky enough to work with successful people.

Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

The Most Happy Fella-Imperial 5/3. Frank Loesser's new musical received rave notices from all but Kerr, Herald Tribune. Reviewer was only in belief that show was weighed down with the variety and fullness of a genuinely creative appetite. Heading the pro side, Atkinson, Times, billed the large size musical based on Sidney Howard's They Knew What They Wanted as a profoundly moving dramatic experience. Mr. Loesser has come about as close to opera as the rules of Broadway permit, critic noted. Chapman, News, billed it as a musical, not opera, that is as distinguished as it is delightful. Robert Weede, Jo Sullivan, Art Lund and the entire company were highly praised by all the reviewers. A masterpiece of our era, summed up Coleman, Mirror. An impressive score, a sound dramatic book, excellent singing and acting, and a forthright style add up to a fine evening adds Watts, Post. Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, billed it as an overwhelming inventive new musical, a rich show drenched in song.

Wake Up Darling-Barrymore 5/2-5/5. Alex Gottlieb short lived comedy only drew one kind notice. Chapman, News, thought it was an extraordinarily cheerful comedy company of actors that makes a nice springtime addition. The official opening of the silly season on Broadway, panned Times man. Comedy failed because author tried too hard, commented Kerr, Herald Tribune. Hilarious gag lines in search of a play, noted Coleman, Mirror. Kay Medford, Barry Nelson and Barbara Britton were generally approved for trying hard with little material to work with. Hawkins, WT&S, concluded play was an undistinguished play about married people.

The Changeling-Shakespeare Theatre Workshop 5/4/1622 play still catches the imagination and leaves its mark, approves Herridge, Post. Jack Cannon in Middleton-Rowley play deserves most of credit for interesting evening. Adler, Times, found some lively moments in the production, but not enough for a full evening of theatre.

15 NYC theatre party agents are being checked by the License Commission and the Investigation Commission for alleged ticket scalping on Broadway hit shows. Investigation Commission is checking on reports that some party agents are selling tickets to My Fair Lady for \$75 to \$150 a pair. License Commission also will investigate both agents and charities to discover what happens to tickets

Plays

Mister Johnson and Wake Up Darling closed ... Waiting for Godot extended to May 26... Inherit the Wind to vacation from June 30-Sept 14... Most Happy Fella will raise prices Sept 3 to \$8.05 top... Candide musical version by Lillian Hellman slated for Oct 25 debut... Solomon Grundy musical satire due Oct 15... Christopher Fry to adapt Jean Giraudoux Pour Lucrece for Playwrights next season.

Players

Imogene Coca will replace Claudette Colbert in Janus June 11... Stokey Gray replaces Rufus Smith, Pipe Dream ... Leo Ciceri replaces Christopher Plummer, The Lark... Jack Cassidy and Shirley Yamaguchi replace Lew Ayres and Susan Cabot in Shangri-La.

Other Broadways

Teahouse of August Moon ANTA company panned in Rio ... Brigadoon USO company to play US army basis in Orient with cast of 17... Noel Coward's South Sea Bubble drew split notices in London.

Legal Dept.

Boston Post editor in chief John McManus testified at House Judiciary sub-committee hearing that "there is no question that J. J. Shubert has tried to intrude upon the freedom of the press in Boston."

Summer Playhouses

Westport, Conn, Country Playhouse opens 26th season with The Chalk Garden June 15... Jayne Meadows, Linda Darnell and Maria Riva set for leads in 3 Tea and Sympathy summer packages; Gertrude Berg and Billie Burke to star in 2 Solid Gold Cadillac tours ... Canton, Conn, Playhouse, opens June 10 ... Shirley Jones will appear in The Beggar-s Opera at Cambridge Drama Festival July 25 ... Summer theatre Equity rates of houses not using stars have been cut.

Award File

The Diary of Anne Frank picked by "Outer Circle" newsmen as best play of year... Marcie Hubert and Arne Sundergaard chosen by Julie Harris, winner of 1956 Barter Theatre Award, to play summer season at Barter Theatre, Virginia.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

High Button Shoes TV rights bought by NBC TV... Barry Sullivan and Anna Maria Alberghetti to co-star in musical version of A Bell for Adano on CBS-TV Ford July 2... Marilyn Monroe reported to make TV debut on NBC TV Producer's Showcase Lysistrata next Jan... Barbara Cook and Keith Andes featured in Bloomer Girl NBC-TV May 28.

Theatre Record Notes

Waiting for Godot to be recorded by Bert Lahr and E G Marshall for Columbia Records... New record firm, Modern Voices, Inc to specialize in LP versions of important literary and dramatic works.

Theatre Film Notes

Saint Joan film rights acquired by Otto Preminger from Shaw Estate... Helen Hayes to co-star with Ingrid Bergman and Yul Brynner in Anastasia film.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

TICKET SOLUTION... In spite of all the earnest attempts to correct the Broadway hit ticket situation none have even come close, notes Watt, News. The only thing the NYC License Commissioner and the NYC Investigation Commissioner will get for their fresh exploration is publicity... The reason people can't get into My Fair Lady is that the theatre seats 1551 and 5000 or more want to see it at the same time, points out Sylvester, News. One solution might be putting on the hit shows at Madison Square Garden or the Polo Grounds. But there still would be more customers than chairs.

COLUMN TIPS... Shubert Alley gossip is that the Shubert Theatre has been sold to Oscar Hammerstein, and the Imperial to RCA, hears Walker... Fireworks expected at Janus where friends of Claude Dauphin and Robert Preston are urging them to leave cast when Imogene Coca joins show, predicts Wilson.

OFF BWAY COVERAGE... Phoenix, Theatre de Lys, Circle in Square, Shakespearewrights, Blackfriars, Fourth St and Cherry Lane theatres have and will continue to present drama which must be reckoned as first class entertainment and hence should be covered, details McClain, Journal American. As for the other groups critic admits he will cover them ONLY when they gain a reputation.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Two Times letter writers urged State Dept. to detail exact reasons why it will not sponsor Diary of Anne Frank at Paris Festival this summer... A children's theatre should be added to Lincoln Square plans, urges Times Magazine reader... What ever happened to the early curtain tests for Broadway, asks a C. D. subscriber.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Watts, Post, admits he will never understand actors, a breed that longs to get into hits, but no sooner in same than they try to escape... The more Kerr, Herald Tribune, sees of TV; the less he thinks of it as an enemy of theatre. An astonishing amount of TV acting is very good acting that is alive, restlessly inventive and believable.

GEORGIES AWARDS... Chocolate Georgies, the only edible of the prizes, presented by Nathan, Journal American, include--- Tiger at the Gates as best play, Julie Harris as best actress, Rex Harrison as best musical comedy actor, William and Jeack Eckert for best sets in Mister Johnson, and Jo Mielziner for best stage lighting in The Lark.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

The Most Happy Fella is a fun-filled, original Italian-American opera. Only complaint is that book is slightly on dull side, and is actually unnecessary. It is perfectly cast and beautifully mounted.

Wake Up Darling presented a stage-ful of expert comedians who were given one line jokes instead of a comedy to present. Plot and characters were tired combinations of many shows seen recently.



OFF BROADWAY

Diana Barrymore and Muriel Rahn will co-star in The Ivory Branch due May 24 at Provincetown... Orion Productions' The One EYed Man is King will debut at Theatre East May 15... Full length opera based on Eastward in Eden to be presented next January in Boston by Boris Goldowsky... Sean O'Casey's Pictures in a Hallway will be presented for 2 performances May 27 at YMHA. . . Shirley Gale replaces Olive Templeton, Uncle Vanya.

Tempo Playhouse, 4 St. Marks Pl, has been granted a theatre license and will re-open May 18 with The Maids, and Arthur Schnitzler's adult puppet play The Gallant Cassian.

Man of Destiny added another pair of split notices to its critical file. Shaw play at Downtown, 85 E 4, was praised by Herridge, Post, as a creditable a production as you are likely to see down of the rarely seen shaw play. She thought it was much better than Candida by the same group, but Geor, Variety, thought new play by company lacked crispness and elan that marked the earlier effort. Candida has been withdrawn and Man of Destiny is now playing nightly Tuesday through Sunday.

Mary Stuart at Guild Hall, W 87th St, was panned by Calta, Times, and Herridge, Post. Former noted that Repertory Players offered 150 year old script with more fervor than distinction. Latter added that it was getting a most uneven production. Both mildly approved portrayals of Jenny Egan.



THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"Waiting for Godot" published by Grove Press makes amazing reading, particularly after seeing the inventive local production, recommends Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun. Drama critic also approves of O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night, published by Yale Press, "Wingless Victory" by Frances Winwar, and the new "Maude Adams."

"Guide to Great Plays" edited by Joseph Shipley(Public Affairs Press) is a gargantuan \$10 worth and a must in libraries, for students and for theatre-goers, raves Abel, Variety.

THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

Mr. Wonderful original cast album by Decca presents a loud and brassy vaudeville show appeal that may commend it to some die-hards, reports Watt, News. Sammy Davis, Jr, is at a disadvantage in the record medium.

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